



Vermont State Housing Authority

Presentation for House Committee on General and Housing
Rental Assistance Programs and New Initiatives

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Topics Covered

- Section 8 Rental Assistance
 - Vermont Emergency Rental Assistance Program (VERAP)
 - New Initiatives
 - Recommendations
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Section 8 Waiting List

In conjunction with rule changes announced by the Agency of Administration affecting eligibility to the Vermont Emergency Rental Assistance Program, VSHA opened the waiting list to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program on October 1, 2022, and later closed the waiting list January 23, 2023.

During this almost three-month period, approximately 5,291 households submitted applications for rental assistance.

Success Rate
of Families
with a
Voucher
finding a
housing unit

February 2022 70%

February 2023 22%

48% decline in voucher success



Households Assisted with Section 8 Rental Assistance by VSHA

Housing Choice
and Project-Based
Vouchers: 4158
households

Project Based
Rental Assistance:
3262 households

Total: 7420

Average Housing Assistance Payment



February 2022 = \$697/month



February 2023 = \$753/ month



Increase of approximately 9.2%

Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

Funded through the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act in Dec 2020 and ARPA in March 2021. A total of \$352 million in funding was allocated to Vermont.



Vermont ERAP (VERAP) is administered by the VSHA under the terms of grant agreement(s) with the Agency of Administration

ERA 1 = \$120,000,000.

ERA 2 = \$72,000,000 (to date)

VERAP Initiatives

Rent Arrearage & Rental Assistance (up to 18 months combined)

Housing Stabilization

- Afghan refugees on the SIT campus in Brattleboro
- Health & Safety Repairs to keep households' stability housed, including Essential Maintenance Practices
- Health & Safety Repairs to bring a unit online for a new household
- Security Deposits/ moving expenses to assist a family in a new unit

Eviction Prevention Initiatives

- Payment of Rent into court
- Stipulations to Dismiss

VERAP will Sunset 6/30/23

*Active participants eligible for assistance through
June 30, 2023: 3,356 households*

Of these households, 1,649 will be rent burdened.

*826 will pay more than
100% of their household
income toward rent*

*216 will pay between 76% to
100% of their household
income toward rent*

*347 will pay between 51% to
75% of their household
income toward rent*

*118 will pay between 41% to
50% of their household
income toward rent*

*142 will pay between 30% to
40% of their household
income toward rent.*

Rent Burden Data by County

Participants Exiting VERAP
6/30/23

<u>Totals by County</u>		<u>Percentage</u>
Addison	68	4.12%
Bennington	126	7.64%
Caledonia	93	5.64%
Chittenden	389	23.59%
Essex	16	0.97%
Franklin	148	8.98%
Grand Isle	11	0.67%
Lamoille	55	3.34%
Orange	60	3.64%
Orleans	104	6.31%
Rutland	217	13.16%
Washington	104	6.31%
Windham	122	7.40%
Windsor	136	8.25%
	1649	1

New Initiatives –



Risk Mitigation Funds: Landlord Relief Program

Risk mitigation funds are a type of insurance for landlords that participate in a subsidized housing program. Housing Choice Vouchers and supportive housing programs are specific types of subsidized housing programs that use these funds.

Risk mitigation funds can provide for lost rent, damage to a unit beyond normal wear and tear, repairs to meet Housing Quality Standards, and in some cases, legal fees for landlords.

Vermont's risk pool program, the "Landlord Relief Program", is made possible by an allocation of \$5 million dollars in general funds to the Agency of Human Services, Office of Economic Opportunity, and granted to VSHA.



The Goals of the Landlord Relief Program is to:

Open doors for landlords and tenants to establish successful and trusting relationships that result in successful tenancies and housing stability.

Increase the inventory of rental units available to Vermonters who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness; and

Provide resources to prevent loss of housing opportunities for tenants and prevent vacancies for landlords.



Landlords may file several claims throughout the tenancy for damages but the total award from all claims may not exceed \$5,000 for a single tenancy, \$10,000 per apartment, and each claim must be at least \$500.

Application Type

All

2/1/2023

4/14/2023



BatchType

All



Applications

County	Applicants
Addison	3
Bennington	9
Caledonia	8
Chittenden	36
Essex	1
Franklin	9
Grand Isle	1
Lamoille	1
Orange	2
Orleans	4
Rutland	14
Washington	6
Windham	8
Windsor	18
Grand Total	120

Approvals

County	Approvals
Bennington	1
Caledonia	1
Chittenden	7
Franklin	1
Orange	1
Orleans	1
Rutland	1
Washington	1
Windham	1
Windsor	6
Grand Total	21

Scheduled

County	Payments
Windsor	\$190.00
Caledonia	\$0.00
Chittenden	\$0.00
Orange	\$0.00
Orleans	\$0.00
Rutland	\$0.00
Washington	\$0.00
Windham	\$0.00
Grand Total	\$190.00

Payments

County	Payments
Caledonia	\$5,000.00
Chittenden	\$12,512.16
Orange	\$5,000.00
Orleans	\$1,122.64
Rutland	\$4,426.37
Washington	\$3,000.00
Windham	\$4,001.82
Windsor	\$16,217.80
Grand Total	\$51,280.79

Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program

Mobile Homes are an important source of affordable housing for over 7,000 Vermont households.

Many mobile home parks and residents have been adversely impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic.

MHIR offers assistance to income-eligible mobile home parks and current and prospective mobile home owners.

Mobile Home Improvement and Replacement Program

The Mobile Home Improvement and Replacement Program has been set up to support manufactured (also known as mobile) home parks, which are an important source of affordable housing in Vermont.

This program offers grants and financial assistance to manufactured (mobile) homeowners, prospective homeowners, and park owners to assist with the recovery from the impacts of the COVID pandemic.

VSHA administers this program in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and Central Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) with \$4,000,000 of State Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Mobile Home Improvement and Replacement Program

The goals of the program are to

- 1) infill vacant or abandoned lots,
- 2) repair existing manufactured homes, and
- 3) provide new foundations for the placement of manufactured homes.

The projects will serve current and prospective manufactured homeowners and registered manufactured home park owners.

Mobile Home Improvement and Replacement Program

The desired outcome is to prepare 125 to 300 vacant or abandoned lots for new manufactured homes, to maintain the habitability of 250 to 400 manufactured homes, and to install 25 to 75 new foundations.

We will measure the program's impacts against these numbers, plus look at the total number of parks, residents, and new homeowners served by the program.

MHIR

MANUFACTURED HOME IMPROVEMENT AND REPAIR PROGRAM

4/14/2023

BatchType

All

All

Applications

County	Applicants
Addison	35
Bennington	12
Caledonia	5
Chittenden	38
Essex	1
Franklin	11
Lamoille	14
Orange	20
Orleans	2
Rutland	4
Washington	7
Windham	3
Windsor	15
Grand Total	167

Approvals

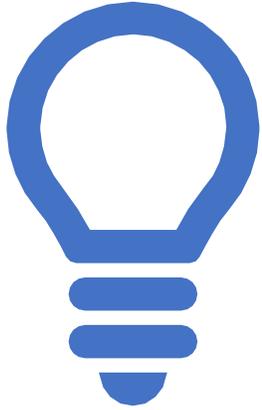
County	Approvals
Chittenden	4
Franklin	1
Washington	1
Windham	1
Grand Total	7

Scheduled

County	Payments
Chittenden	\$47,260.14
Franklin	\$0.00
Washington	\$0.00
Windham	\$0.00
Grand Total	\$47,260.14

Payments

County	Payments
Chittenden	\$9,000.00
Franklin	\$5,400.00
Washington	\$16,950.00
Windham	\$5,056.20
Grand Total	\$36,406.20



Recommendation

...Fund an Eviction Rescue Program

Why an Eviction Rescue Program?

With inflation on the rise, rapidly depleting federal stimulus funds and thousands of Vermonters still unable to pay their rent, preventing eviction and supporting long-term housing stability are urgent state imperatives.



Among many other repercussions for families, eviction results in long-term financial instability and limited access to affordable housing, while also causing psychological strain, depression, physical health problems and child poverty

Why an Eviction Rescue Program?

Rent assistance can prevent costly eviction before it ever gets to court.

The average grant of rent arrears by RHSP was [\$1900] the average amount of rent assistance provided by VERAP was [\$1700].

While VERAP was running 400 fewer eviction cases were filed in court.

Why an Eviction Rescue Program?

Creating a program that can quickly process requests for payment of rent arrears and Stipulations to Dismiss evictions for non-payment of rent would:

- Save time and money,
- keep the court system open for more urgent matters, and
- keep people safely housed



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- The existing Landlord Relief Program IS incentivizing landlords to rent to people with subsidy...
 - in less than two months the program has paid out \$51,280 to landlords.
 - this is a critical resource for leveraging state and federal rental housing resources and providing housing to Vermont's most vulnerable.

More tools are needed

I urge this committee and the General Assembly to create an Eviction Rescue Program, to prevent non-payment eviction by making funds available for rent arrears where such funds would preserve the tenancy – and keep Vermonter's stability housed.

Thank you!

For more information about the programs VSHA administers, please visit our website at www.vsha.org

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Contact me directly: 802-828-3019/
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Respectfully,

Kathleen Berk, Executive Director

